BOOK REVIEWS


Gastro-intestinal endoscopy is a growth industry. The number of centres providing an endoscopy service and the number of examinations performed continues to increase in geometric progression. A major problem facing clinicians and administrators in the future will be the shortage of trained personnel available to undertake the vast work-load involved. Against this background, the need for skilled nurses and technicians is obvious and has given rise to a new career grade of Endoscopy Assistant.

The appearance of a new book dealing with all the facets of gastro-intestinal endoscopy which need to be mastered by the endoscopy nurse, the first of its kind, is therefore inevitable. We are lucky that it is a good one. It needs to be more widely appreciated, particularly within the nursing profession itself, what a wide range of knowledge and skills is required by the nurse or technician involved in running an endoscopy service. The field is very technical and is well covered in this small book.

The text covers in moderate detail the physical principles and instrument design, the ancillary equipment, the assistant's role in patient care and instrument care, the problems of resuscitation and urgent endoscopy, the administration and organisation of an endoscopy unit, the dealing with pathology and photographic specimens, and the wide range of drugs used in endoscopy. Most attention is given to upper tract endoscopy but colonoscopy and sigmoidoscopy are also well dealt with, while ERCP and other more unusual procedures are briefly explained. Throughout, emphasis is correctly placed on practical aspects; and an appendix provides examples of proformata used in endoscopy, details of trolley setting for the various procedures, dietary regimes used in preparation for colonoscopy, and details of instructional training courses available for endoscopy assistants (the only areas where information is complete).

We in the Army Medical Services have developed our endoscopy facilities satisfactorily so far, and selected nurses are being sent on training courses. We must be careful that the number of trained ancillaries keeps pace with the increasing demand. This useful book provides most of the knowledge required and, at £4.75 should be easily obtainable by endoscopy centres in our hospitals and by interested individuals. Its place is on the work-bench in the endoscopy department, not on the library shelf.

D M ROBERTS


This is a reset and extensively revised version of the author's "Principles of Medical Statistics" first published in 1937 and reaching nine editions in its original form.

The book covers most of the statistical techniques used in studies; sampling, questionnaire design, presentation of data, correlation, regression, death rates, life tables, measures of morbidity etc. and there is a discussion on the ethical and practical problems in clinical trials. Great emphasis is placed on methods of calculation and one is taken through the steps in great (sometimes too great) detail. I wonder whether this is really necessary these days. Most of us have access to some sort of computing facility.

What is more important, however is that the author wants us to understand why and how we use different methods and while the explanations are sometimes wearingly lengthy their necessity is unquestioned. The final chapters are concerned with "common fallacies and difficulties" and discuss the all too common pitfalls that the unwary may fall into. Again these are well worthwhile.

This book is undoubtedly a classic of its kind and should be found on the shelves (or perhaps more usefully on the desk or bench) of all medical research workers making use of, but not fully trained in, statistical techniques.

B. OELMAN


Recent rapid advances in radio-immunoassay and other techniques have widened the scope for routine biochemical investigations especially in the endocrine field and this rendered the previous edition considerably out of date. The revised edition has been eagerly awaited and
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I am confident that the majority of readers will not be disappointed with the third edition which incorporates the most significant advances in the subject.

Investigation of gonadal function has been revolutionised by the introduction of routine methods for the assay of hormones and this subject has now been given a separate chapter. Newer advances in pre-natal monitoring have been included and there is a new chapter on the biochemical effect of tumours. Other changes have been hydrogen ion homestasis and in part of the chapter on carbohydrate metabolism.

The inclusion of normal Values for the first time has enhanced the value of the book but it is felt that it would have been helpful to include the values in the appropriate part of the text as well as providing a consolidated table at the end. It is considered that it is pedantic to leave a blank for normal ranges to be filled in by the student for his own laboratory because many students studying for examinations are not attached to a particular laboratory and this information is not therefore available.

Overall this is an excellent introduction to the basic aspects of chemical pathology. It can be thoroughly recommended for those preparing for Part I of the MRCP, Primary FRCS, MRCPath as well as for the Special Examination for Fellowship of the IMLS. It provides excellent groundwork for study for the primary and final MRCPath in chemical pathology as the selected subject but in this case it must be supplemented by extensive wider reading for which the lists for “Further Reading” at the end of each chapter are invaluable. Finally, clinicians who wish to revise their general knowledge of the subject or refer to topics in respect of particular clinical problems will find the book extremely useful.

N W J ENGLAND


When I received the 5th edition of this book in 1976 I finished by saying that “it is inevitable that this book will continue to thrive for a long time to come.” Four years later, this sixth edition carries its progress one stage further. It suffers the same drawbacks and limitations of its predecessors (oversimplification as the price of brevity, aberrations of selection of material) but retains its strong points. It remains one of the two best English language textbooks of general medicine for the medical student studying for his final examinations.

Revision has been fairly extensive, particularly in the sections on cardiovascular disease and on endocrine disorders. Six editions over nineteen years implies devotion on the part of its editors and trust on the part of its readers. Both are easily discernible.

D M ROBERTS

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Information has been received that the officers named below have been accepted for Fellowship of the Royal College of General Practitioners.

Col J G Waller, MB, ChB, MRCGP, DObstRCOG, DTM&H, DCH, L/RAMC. Lt Col A O Billinghurst, MB, BS, MRCGP, RAMC. Lt Col T A I Bouchier-Hayes, MRCGP, LAH, DObstRCOG, RAMC.

Maj Gen J Lapper, QHS, MB, ChB, MFCM, DLO, MBIM, has been accepted for Fellowship of the Faculty of Community Medicine.